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Electric Scotland's Weekly Newsletter for July 26th, 2013

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Electric Scotland News

I was following up on the clan caucus at Grandfather Highland Games and found a Presentation by Robert McWilliam at the 2009 International Scottish Clan Convention in Edinburgh, Scotland on "Strengths and Aspirations of the Worldwide Clan Community as it Establishes Links to Twenty-First Century Scotland".

I felt it would be useful to provide this full presentation here... the report is 9 pages so quite lengthy but I think of interest to most of our readers with lots of good information and so here it is...

Good morning. I have been asked to speak about the strengths and aspirations of the Scots abroad in the worldwide Scottish community as it establishes links to twenty-first century Scotland.

There are approximately 5 million Scots in Scotland and about 40 million Scots world-wide and the debate in Scotland is whether Scotland is a country of five million people or a global community of forty-five million Scots.

One of the great strengths of the Scottish Diaspora is a record of past and present accomplishments that are dramatically out of proportion to their numbers in all the countries to which they have emigrated. These accomplishments are in all fields of endeavour: science, literature, philosophy, the military, politics, the arts, diplomacy and the business world.

For purposes of our discussion, I have selected four countries where they have settled, followed by brief comments regarding their success. The numbers I have used have been very difficult to find and if there were two or more sources, they were often contradictory. Given the way Scots discuss these matters, this should give great credibility to the numbers presented.

Canada

Canada has a population of approximately 33 million, with about 4 million Scots, or about 14% of the population - the third largest ethnic group behind the English and French. (Stats Canada report Scottish Ethnic numbers at 4,719,850 in 2006 just 220,00 short of the French).

The Scots were prominent in the founding and development of all their provinces. Nova Scotia and Cape Breton have the highest concentration with pockets of Gaelic still spoken and with the purest of early Scottish music.

The first two Canadian Prime Ministers were native Scots - John A. MacDonald and Alexander MacKenzie. MacDonald was the new nation's principal founder. Since the Confederacy was formed in 1867, eight men and one woman of Scottish ancestry have been prime ministers covering more than two-thirds of the time. Five different Scots founded five of the first six colleges.

There are more than 50 Clan societies and a great number of other Scottish societies particularly Burns Clubs and 64 games and festivals. Ontario Province has 27 games alone.

All the Provinces in Canada have Provincial Tartans.

In Canada there are four organisations representing the Clans, and there are other Scottish organisations that assist in improving communication between the groups.

Clans and Scottish Societies of Canada in Ontario was founded in 1976. The federation of Scottish Clans in Nova Scotia started in 1982, There is the United Council of Scots of Atlantic Canada and on the West Coast, Sons of Scotland, who recently bought a centre for better communication between organisations. These are centres of information with quarterly newsletters and other means to enhance communication within the Scottish community. There are 14 Scottish Regiments in the Canadian Army Reserve.

Australia

Australia has a population of 21.5 million, with 1.5 million claiming Scottish ancestry. The early history of Australia is practically all Scots. During the first nine decades of the Commonwealth, Scots have been prime ministers for more than half of the time. The face of five Australian bank notes feature Scottish individuals who made a difference in the history of the country.

There are about 75 clan societies, with a great number of other groups also listed. The Scottish Australian Heritage Council, formed in 1981, is the centre for communication among the various organisations.

There are several regional tartans and one of the world's largest Highland games is at Bundamoon, which is one of about 19 games in Australia.

New Zealand

The population of New Zealand is 4.3 million, with 12,791 Scots population. Scots were prominent in the settlement of New Zealand. There are approximately 40 clan societies as well as numerous other Scottish Societies listed by the Combined Council of Scottish Societies in Auckland, which was formed to promote communication among the various Scottish groups.

New Zealand Scottish culture, which is quite a bit different from the culture at home, is very much dominated by pipe bands, Scottish Highland dancing and several Highland Games.

United States

The 1990 census indicates that there are about five million Scots and about five million Scots-Irish for a total population of around ten million, or about two percent of the population. The five largest states with Scottish descendants are listed below with approximate figures from various sources:

California - 542,000. About ten percent of the US Scots live in California, with Scots-Irish 1,193,170. Florida has 294,000; Texas - 285,000; Michigan - 224,000; North Carolina - 255,825.

The United States was built by the Scots as far as we American Scots are concerned, and for an ethnic group making up about two percent of the population we have a greatly disproportionate presence for our numbers.

Woodrow Wilson, one of our US Presidents with Scottish ancestry, said "Every line of our strength in our history is a line coloured by Scottish Blood".

The Highlander Magazine in its Annual Directory lists 170-plus clans and family associations plus 285 other Scottish societies such as the St. Andrew Societies, the Caledonian societies, Burns Clubs, local Scottish societies and societies with special Scottish interests.

All fifty states have at least one society with other than clan connections.

There are about 225-plus Highland games and Scottish Festivals in the United States. The largest number of games is found in California, with about 28 games in Pleasanton across the Bay from San Francisco, probably the largest in the US with about 50-to-60 attendees, followed by the Texas Scottish Games in Arlington with about 45,000. Grandfather Mountain in North Carolina with 45,000 to 50,000, and Loon Mountain in New Hampshire and the Stone Mountain games in Georgia having about the same figures. These games and several others with fewer attendees have around 100-plus Clan representatives at their games.

We now have a Scottish Caucus in the US Congress, both in the House of Representatives and in the Senate. There are 36 states that have an official state tartan. All our Armed Forces have either an official or unofficial tartan.

In 1969 during the inauguration of President Nixon, a news commentator with a Scottish bent, watching the ceremony on television, mentioned that on the inaugural platform, standing together, were President Lyndon Johnson, President Richard Nixon and American Evangelist Billy Graham - all descendants of the Border Reivers families, known for their lawlessness family feuds, lifting cattle and stealing women. Now 300 years later they are running and influencing one of the most powerful countries in the world.

The following is an anecdote of our strength in science taken from Duncan Bruce's book "The Mark of the Scots" which every Scot ought to have in his library.

During the early part of Nixon's Presidency, the United States landed a manned spacecraft on the moon. Neil Armstrong stepped off the ladder of the spacecraft and became the first man on the moon. He then gets a call from President Nixon, who's family came from Dumfries-shire via Northern Ireland to the US (those we call "Scots-Irish" in the US), congratulating him on his accomplishment. Both were members of the Armstrong clan and might have been distant kinsman.

The conversation between Armstrong and Nixon was made possible by Alexander Graham Bell, another Border family and Guglielmo Marconi, whose mother was of Scots-Irish ancestry. And it was all shown on television - invented by another Scot, John Logie-Baird. And just to make sure that things would go right, five of the original seven American astronauts were of Scottish ancestry, and five of the original 12 men who have walked on the moon had Scottish ancestry.

Another astronaut on that flight with Armstrong with Scottish ancestry was Edwin Aldrin. On a subsequent trip Alan Bean brought the MacBain tartan to the moon and in 1991 Jerry Ross wore a Clan Ross tartan patch into space. Astronaut Navy Captain Laurel Clark was an avid Scot descendant who died when the Columbia spacecraft broke up on its return flight. She had arranged with NASA to have "The Black Bear" and "Amazing Grace" recorded by The Black Watch Pipe Band played as a morning wake-up music during Columbia's flight.

As my children said: "How cool is all that!"

It has been said that if you took all the Scots out of the world it would collapse. So one can say of the Scottish Diaspora that it is of great strength and as the old saying goes "There is no Scot so Scottish as a Scot abroad." We Scots in the Midwest of America relate to Garrison Keillor's Lake Wobegon residents who state that "All our women are beautiful, our men are good-looking and all of our children are above average."

So what strengths do Clan Societies have that would help Scotland be part of that worldwide community in the 21st Century. Here are some of the things the Clan Societies do: They help individuals establish a connection with Scotland and a Scottish clan affiliation. They introduce that individual to their Clan history and to the history of Scotland that has been lost or forgotten by the family.

They help individuals research their family genealogy and point out the resources for ancestry research.

They provide advice on things Scottish such as Scottish weddings, dinners, recipes, funerals, a Burns supper, what to wear, when to wear it, where to buy it, how much to pay for it and how to wear it. "No, the pleats go in back".

They introduce him or her to the Scottish movement in the community.

They help raise funds for the preservation and restoration of former and current clan properties in Scotland - 20,000 acres in the Clan Donald Lands Trust, now enjoyed by all Scots worldwide, plus additional acreage recently acquired.

The foster new pride in the individual with his family name, increasing his self-esteem as a result of his finding out that despite his humble circumstances, he is a member of an ancient and honourable family with the blood of heroes and greatness running through his veins.

They create a pool of educated, motivated individuals who are willing to volunteer countless hours of time and money to support the clan, to hold office in the clan and accept the responsibility of helping to administer it and increase its presence in the Scottish

movement and happy to further the clan, other societies, and Scotland's interests in the world community.

The members of the 170 Clan societies and those of the 285 other societies in the US are the main pillars in supporting the 250-plus games in the United States. All volunteers.

The clans have created a huge clan network of members all over the United States with members in every state, most of whom attend their local games. Some of these games attract 40,000 to 60,000 attendees. The combination of the large nationally intermingled clan networks and the numerous locations of the game sites have assisted in providing a venue for their members to purchase Scottish goods and provide places, like no other, for Scottish merchants to sell "Scotland the Brand."

So what are some of the aspirations of the Clans relative to their chiefs, The Standing Council, Scottish Government agencies, and other organisations.

I will mention some suggestions I have received for this occasion. Some of these are quite incendiary and maybe we should have a Eire drill before continuing, but please remember I am only the messenger. We have no desire to change ancient customs - only help create new ones.

The Clan Chiefs

Treat overseas clan societies as an integral part of the clan in the traditional sense of belonging.

The head of each clan organisation outside of Scotland should be officially recognised by the Clan Chief and appointed to be his personal representative during his or her term of office. This adds much prestige to the office.

The Chiefs should visit the countries where they have member associations as often as possible to encourage this, the Clans should pay or help pay for the trip where possible. Chiefs should let the Clan know when they are in a country so that a dinner or other gathering could be held.

Chiefs should bring the heir apparent along on visits to his clans outside of Scotland whenever it is convenient and affordable so that his clan gets to know his possible successor and he or she gets to know them. Do some short-term fostering and have the heir apparent stay for a short time with some of the overseas families.

Help find a certified genealogist who is familiar with the intricacies of the clan history and who can train a local clan genealogist in the clan history and help the clansmen draft petitions to the Lord Lyon for Coat of Arms.

Chiefs at games should make a point of taking a walkabout to visit all of the clan tents or as many as possible. It gives the people in other clan tents a good feeling.

The Chief might participate in the board meetings at the Annual General Meeting of overseas clans either personally or by telephone or video conferencing where the electronics permit his hearing everything that is being said and can be heard by everyone when talking.

Possible use of Facebook and Twitter pages to communicate with clan leadership worldwide. This is one of the principal means of communication among youth around the world.

An annual statement published in the Clan newsletter of the Chief's views of things that happened during the year, including the Chief's future expectations of the Society.

The Chiefs could help persuade the local tourist councils covering the clan's traditional lands to work with members of the clan to come and visit the clan's former lands and buildings. Provide a list of good quality places to stay with reasonable prices in these same areas.

Chiefs could persuade their local tourist councils to visit the US and attend some of the most popular games in the US and Canada in order to promote their tourist areas.

The Chief in each clan to persuade the clan to have a Standard Manual of Operating Procedures and Policies which the Chief might help in drafting.

Standing Council of Scottish Chiefs

Wouldn't it be interesting if each clan had a worldwide headquarters, providing access for their representatives and commissioners from any of the countries where the clan had a presence.

What about a worldwide Council of Scottish Clans and Associations with permanent headquarters and a website and a full-time administrator paid by all the clan organisations.

Provide a Mediation Service to resolve internal conflicts in the clans and associations. Help avoid the formation of two or more associations.

I have just attended the Grandfather Mountain Highland Games in North Carolina, which I mentioned earlier. Their profit each year is substantial and goes to the non-profit organisations in their surrounding communities and to scholarships so that the children in these rural areas can go to college. To run those games, they have over 500 volunteers and a couple of part-time paid employees who work part-time around the year. All the Clans and the 250-plus games and other US Organisations except two, that I am aware of, are all volunteers.

We all pay a great deal out of our pockets for the privilege of working for the Scottish Movement in the US.

Establish working committees among Standing Council members and later include delegates from member clans to participate in the committee work.

Recognition of good works done by the clan societies in Scotland, such as donations to the Culloden restoration project, donations to reforestation.

Recognition of the thousands of hours of volunteer time put in by clan society members. Some clan societies do this, but not all of them.

In arranging Clan tours, include properties of The National Trust for Scotland as well as Historical Scotland and others such as the National Museums of Scotland and the many nature preserves.

What about an International conference every two or three years held in different countries with workshops on "Best Practices" and leadership techniques?

Work with clans and games to get commercial airlines to have a presence at the larger games with offers of most favourable fares during the off-seasons of spring, fall and winter.

Help persuade local Tourist Councils to introduce their Scottish tourist areas at some of the most popular games in the US and Canada.

Standing Council and Scottish Government agencies (Lord Lyon's Office) streamline and update the process of having a clan chief recognised, not to weaken the selection process but to make it more workable in this day and age.

Persuade the larger, better organised clans to help the smaller or newer clans get organised. Help sponsor "How-To" forums for all clans.

Standing Council to have individuals who stay in touch with Canadian, Australian, New Zealand and US Clan and Society Associations such as COSCA, CASSOC and the other societies who publish newsletters about what is going on in their country.

Chiefs of the Standing Council have an annual or semi-annual conference devoted to discussing common problems. This could be done telephonically.

In the United States we have two Scottish forums - one presented by The Caledonian Foundation USA, Inc. each year which presents speakers from the US and Scotland to discuss topics of special interest - similar to a "think tank" program. The other forum is put on by the Illinois St Andrew Society, probably the largest Scottish Society of its kind in the US. In conjunction with the American-Scottish Foundation, Inc. and is called the North American Scottish Leadership Conference. The program provides a blend of Best Practices in the running of a Scottish organisation, to include such topics as How to pick the best Board of Directors, How to increase your membership, How to raise money, How to develop good public relations. These "How To programs" are mixed in with presentations from Scottish universities, Scottish Government Agencies, private Scottish organisations that deserve a presence and support in the United States as well as American-Scottish organisations in the US.

The 1987 Symposium of the Caledonian Foundation USA saw the formation of The Scottish Coalition USA, an organisation of the seven major Scottish organisations in the United States, and the creation of Tartan Day observance in the US. The American-Scottish Foundation helped acquire funding for both the New York Tartan Day weekend and the first observance of Tartan Day in Washington DC. both conferences had wonderful programs where US Scots were able to listen to outstanding presentations by Scottish speakers on a variety of subjects - cultural, business, as well as Scottish government organisations. The interest and input of Scottish

Government agencies and Scottish companies and other organisations as well as that of the US organisations have made this program an outstanding success in terms of the attending organisations acquiring best Practice Techniques and getting to know the native Scot. So how can The Standing Council participate in and help facilitate these successful programs to a worldwide clan audience?

The Standing Council and the Clans help support funding that would be used to create a Centre for Scottish Studies in countries where none now exists, using Canada's Guelph University as a model.

Scottish Government Agencies

Scottish Tourist Boards and Visit Scotland could have representatives in other countries that are not connected to or working for private tourist companies.

Visit Scotland could attend the four or five major games in the US just to evaluate the potential for Scottish tourism.

The University of the Highlands and Islands could have a Tourist industry training program. Students could be placed in intern programs where they would come to the United States and Canada to see the potential for Scottish tourism.

Plan to support The Scottish District Families Association that was created to recognise the families who were not in a Clan or Family Association but whose families were known to have lived in certain Districts of Scotland. The Districts would have an association that would be open to families who had traditionally come from that District. This would give these families a stronger, more meaningful focus regarding their connection to Scotland - somewhat similar to a Clan affiliation. The Council of Scottish Clans and Associations Inc., and the Scottish District Families Association have a computer bank of potential members that have been collected at the games over many years.

"No question the birthplace of valor-crazy. Quixotic, unquestioned valor; the blind valor that drove the Clansmen, hungry and freezing and exhausted at Culloden

"But let's face it, valor often squandered in a history just as full of schemes and betrayal, blood feuds, cowardice, greed for land.

"Yet they have obviously passed on to us something extraordinary and mysterious, something magnificent and magnified over the generations, and romanticised, and sentimentalised and commercialised. It's an industry now, but as real as our needs are real, as Scottish pride, something that transcends all the nastiness there may have been in history.

"It is mysterious but it is real enough to bring us all here: to reassemble your membership annually for 230 years - incredible, with misty eyes and proud hearts to celebrate a piece of each of us that resides outside the land we live in because, in a sense, we of Scottish descent inhabit not only this real land, but as well a psychic land where we are all brave and daring and loyal and chivalrous, where we are better than ourselves.

"And if we boast to tell the rest of the world that this is Scottishness, well, we're a'right for a' that"

Thank you, ladies and gentleman, for your attention.

Robert McWilliam

Electric Canadian

The Scots Canadian

Got in a copy of their Summer 2013 Newsletter which you can view at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/lifestyle/summer2013.pdf>

Donald McCaig

Famous educationist in 19th Century Canada who also produced an excellent volume of poems and songs which we've included along with a wee bio about him.

You can view this at http://www.electriccanadian.com/makers/mccaig_donald.htm

The Flag in the Wind

At time of writing the current issue was not available.

You can read this issue at <http://www.scotsindependent.org>

Electric Scotland

The Scottish Historical Review

We have now completed Volume 9 by adding this week the July 1912 issue. You can get to this at:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/history/review/volume09.htm>

In this issue there is a good article about "Student Life in St. Andrews before 1450 A.D."

Also a very interesting article about John Bruce, Historiographer in which we also learn of the major role that Scots played in India.

As it happens I did extract this particular article a few years ago so you can also read this at:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/history/articles/review/review15.htm>

You can read the previous issues at <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/review/>

Songs Of Scotland, Prior To Burns

This book is by Robert Chambers who is famous for collecting old Scottish Songs.

Added this week are...

Saw Ye My Father

Leader Haughs and Yarrow

Omnia Vincit Amor

You can get to this book at the foot of the page at:

http://www.electricscotland.com/history/other/chambers_robert.htm

The Annals of Scottish Natural History

Have now added Volume 19 1910 issue.

There is a lot of interest in whaling in Scotland these days so you might be interesting in knowing that this issue has a report on Whaling in Scotland in 1909.

You can get to this at http://www.electricscotland.com/nature/natural_history.htm

Christina's Column

Got in Christina's column for 22nd July 2013: The Lassies Week, which you can read at:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/history/mckelvie/130722.htm>

The other columns can be read at <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/mckelvie/>

Thomas Dykes

(1850, Dundonald, Ayrshire - 1916, London, England) Journalist and Author

This week we added to his book "All Round Sport with Fish, Fur and Feather"...

A Day's Rabbit Shooting

A Ramble Round Rothesay

You can read these at http://www.electricscotland.com/history/other/dykes_thomas.htm

Enigma Machine

This is where we are publishing this set of puzzles created by Doug Ross which can now be found in Doctor's Surgeries, Old Folks Homes, etc.

Added Enigma Machine 24 puzzle which you can get to at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/lifestyle/enigma/enigma024.htm>

The other puzzles we've already published can be found at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/lifestyle/enigma/index.htm>

Songs from John Henderson

John has sent us in another song, 19th Century Eddicashun, which you can read at:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/poetry/doggerel502.htm>

His other songs can be read at <http://www.electricscotland.com/poetry/doggerels.htm>

Scottish Fairy and Folk Tales

Selected and Edited with an Introduction by Sir George Douglas, Bart.

Added several more chapters....

Comic Tales

Literary Tales

And this now completes this book.

You can read these at: <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/fairy>

Aberdour and Inchcolm

Being historical notices of the Parish and Monastery in twelve lectures by Rev. William Ross LL.D. (1885) A new book we're starting.

We are now up to Lecture 8. These lectures certainly contain a ton of information. For example in Lecture 4 the contents include...

The Monastery at first a priory, then an abbey—The Augustinian Rule— The dress of the Canons—Bricius and Walter, Priors, and their contemporaries—Michael and Walter, Priors—The unbearable excesses of Prior William—Excellent qualities of Prior Nigel—Henry, the first Abbot—Quarrel about the mill of Aberdour—Abbot Thomas, his reign and resignation—Abbot William, fight about the multures of Cullelo— An appeal to the Pope—Abbot Bricius—Raids and miracles—Abbot Walter—Abbot John Dersy—Abbot Laurence and his edifices—Abbot John—The ' sitting down of the Cardinal'—Abbot Walter Bower — Abbot Michael—Patrick Graham, Archbishop of St. Andrews, a prisoner in the Monastery—Abbot Thomas—Abbot John—Richard Abercromby, the last of the Abbots—The martyr, Thomas Forret, Vicar of Dollar—Sir John Luttrell, Knight and Abbot.

You can read this book at <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/aberdour/index.htm>

Under Many Flags

Or Stories of Scottish Adventurers by W H Davenport Adams (1896)

A new book we're starting. The people in this book include...

Soldiers of Fortune in France, The Scots Guard, Sir John Hepburn, Sir James Turner, General Patrick Gordon, The Founder of the Bank of England, John Law, Two Famous Brothers: George and James Keith and Field-Marshal James Keith.

We now have up the first 5 chapters which you can read at:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/history/flags/index.htm>

Beauties of Dr. John Moore

Selected from the moral, philosophical, and miscellaneous works of that esteemed author, to which are added, a new biographical and critical account of the doctor and his writings, and notes, historical, classical, and explanatory.

Here is a wee snippet from this book...

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT

Mr. Quirk, the attorney, happened to call on Sir R. while he was revolving in his mind, at what time of life his son George had a chance to make a decent appearance: and he mentioned the circumstance to him. Mr. Q. had on two or three occasions, been witness to young George's obstinacy in dispute, and perseverance in supporting a bad cause: on this foundation, he said, "There was reason to believe the young gentleman was possessed of very promising talents for the bar;" but Sir R. insisted that George was by much too indolent for that profession, and, he feared, had no capacity sufficient for conducting any branch of commerce; "We must, therefore, think," added he, "of some kind of employment, which will give him little trouble, and require but a moderate extent of capacity."

"You had best put him in parliament, then," added Mr. Quirk, "that gives little trouble, and has succeeded wonderfully with men of as moderate capacities as are to be met with."

Sir R. asked his son, how he should like to be a member of the House of Commons? On Mr. George's hesitating, Sir. Quirk adjoined, "It is a very honourable situation for young men who have nothing to do; and it requires neither application nor study."

"What docs it require, then?" said George. "It requires money to purchase a seat," answered Mr. Quirk. "Which I am willing to advance," said Sir R.

"I believe the House meets at the hour of dinner," said George, "and some of the members make desperate long speeches."

"The young gentleman's remark is equally acute and just," rejoined the attorney, looking at Sir R. "Nevertheless I can assure him that any member may withdraw when he is tired, whether at the beginning, middle, or end of a speech."

"Are you absolutely certain of that?" added Mr. George.

"Absolutely certain," replied Mr. Quirk, "otherwise who would be a member of parliament?"

"Not I, for one," answered Mr. George. "You need be under no apprehension of that sort; for no strict attendance, as you dread, is required," said Mr. Quirk.

"I should be glad to know what is absolutely requisite in a member of parliament?" said George.

"Only that you should be able to say Aye or No," said Sir R. a little angrily. "Will that satisfy you?"

This is a new book we're going to serialise and we have the first 100 pages of this book up now which you can read at http://www.electricscotland.com/history/other/moore_john.htm

Scotland in Europe

Got in an update on this paper by Dr James Wilkie which you can read at:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/independence/scotlandineurope.htm>

Beth's Newfangled Family Tree

Got in section 2 of her August 2013 edition which can be read at:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/bnft>

Should have section 1 in for next week.

Scotland Food and Drink

Added a wee video show casing Scotland's Food and Drink which you can see at:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/food>

I also added a video of how a major Scottish butcher makes Haggis at:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/haggis>

Clan Shaw Map of Clan Lands

I got sent in a copy of a map showing the lands of Clan Shaw. You can view this at:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/webclans/stoz/shaw4.html>

And finally...

Wrap-Up!

A Scot and an American were talking about playing golf during the various seasons of the year. "In most parts of the USA we can't play in the winter time. We have to wait until spring," the American said.

"Why, in Scotland we can even play in the winter. Snow and cold are no obstacle to us," said the Scot.

"Well, what do you do? Paint your balls black?" asked the American.

"No," said the Scot, "we just put on an extra sweater or two."

Best Foot Forward ... Backwards?

Did you hear about the employee who arrived an hour late for work one winter's morning and explained to his boss that it was so slippery outside that for every step forward he took, he slipped two back.

"Is that so?" replied his suspicious boss. "Then how did you ever get here?"

"I gave up and started for home," replied the tardy worker.

And that's it for now and hope you all have a great weekend.

Alastair